29 April 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Current Intelligence

SUBJECT : Preliminary Appraisal of the National

Intelligence Daily

#### Overview

- 1. Before attempting to write its study of the NID, the committee spent a good deal of time discussing the newspaper as a group and a still greater amount of time querying OCI people. This report reflects those conversations as well as the committee's judgments. Although there were clear differences of opinion on certain issues, the committee itself—and the people with whom it talked—did agree on a number of questions. All recognize that the newspaper is still young and is in an experimental stage; it is an evolving publication and OCI attitudes toward it are still being shaped.
- 2. The general attitude at the division level toward the NID seems to be one of somewhat grudging acceptance of the paper as a fact of life. Some members of OCI, including some at the division level as well as most of the NID staff, find the newspaper an effective intelligence publication and are enthusiastic about it. Others believe it is ineffectual and an effort that has had a negative impact on OCI's other responsibilities. For the most part, OCIers were neither extremely critical nor highly laudatory; rather, a kind of ambivalence and even indifference toward the NID as a vehicle to communicate ideas to the policy makers seems to prevail. This attitude—which is shared not just by working analysts but also by some supervisors and production officers—may be the result of several factors or circumstances,

some of them interlocking. Uncertainties about the NID are part and parcel of other uncertainties relating to the office as a whole and to its mission under the Nixon administration. These uncertainties are compounded by the fact that decisions about the IC Staff's "family of publications" are still pending and that the NIB is still an unknown quantity. Further, the NID was born during a very uncomfortable period. Considerable frustrations had developed in OCI as a result of shakeups occurring last year-personnel cuts, the creation of OPR, rapid high-level management changes, Watergate and the CIA, and the bad press accorded the Agency.

- Nonetheless, even critics of the newspaper see merits in it. Some see the NID as more flexible in certain The deadlines for submission of items are less respects. rigid and formal coordination is unnecessary in every case. Although there are differences of opinion on this point, certain analysts feel that there is also flexibility in the length of items and in the depth and breadth of coverage. Feature items were singled out as particularly praiseworthy. Some analysts also welcome the chance to formulate their views in writing more often. Many feel that the discipline of having to put thoughts down on paper more often promotes better conceptualization and leads to sharper intelligence judgments. The NID has also encouraged the office to make more use of DDO production and thereby discouraged their dissemination of raw intelligence.
- 4. On the plus side, too, is the fact that some of the potential problems envisaged before the NID actually went into print have not materialized. Night staffing arrangements, which vary considerably from division to division, seem to be working out reasonably well. And, at least for the moment, the NID has not imposed an unacceptable workload on any one office component.
- 5. For a good many in OCI, however, these positive points are outweighed by negative features. Broadly speaking, a number of people are concerned over what they see as a conflict between the concept of the NID as an intelligence publication and as a newspaper. And they perceive a corollary conflict between the attempt to publish a journal of first record and a publication of reasoned analysis. This conflict is not a new one for OCI. The same issue--reporting versus analysis--was raised in regard to the CIB and many felt that

vehicle, too, suffered because analysis sometimes took a back seat to reporting. But this conflict assumes a new and somewhat more serious dimension with the NID because of the tendency to emphasize total timeliness. developments, the important aspect is not that the newspaper carry an immediate announcement that such-and-such has happened but that at some point the analyst put that development in perspective. In other words, the emphasis should be on quality of thought, analysis and projection and it should be timely as appropriate -- not competitive with the daily newspapers. The emphasis -- not always consistent -- on the reportorial aspects of the NID has contributed to a further blurring of the concept of intelligence. The conclusion is, then, that the NID has not yet fully come to grips with the problem of blending its three guises: a journalistic, timely publication; a purveyor of hard intelligence; and a journal of reasoned analysis.

shaped by too many non-substantive considerations—space to fill or not fill, headlines which are sometimes misleading, the "competition"—particularly in terms of timeliness—from the Washington Post and the New York Times, and the inaccuracies and distortions resulting from a search for style or an attempt to fit an item into a certain amount of space. In an effort to "sell" OCI's intelligence product—an apparent result of a perceived lack of access to or impact on policy makers—the vehicle risks becoming more important than the message—information, intelligence, analysis—the office is trying to impart. The vehicle seems to be shaping the intelligence product rather than the other way around.

### Specific Problems and Concerns

7. More specifically, the committee has identified problems which fall into four general categories: the conflict between analytical and reportorial functions; the absence of clear guidelines; the negative impact of the NID on other OCI duties, especially the responsibility for other intelligence publications; and the flaws in the system of editing and processing the paper.

- One quite basic and frustrating problem is that of finding the proper mix between the analytic and the reportorial functions. The newspaper should -- and in many instances does -- give more opportunity for that blend of analysis and reporting, in part simply because there is more space. And there are a number of times when purely reportorial items are called for regardless of the hour or the adequacy of information. But there are also times when there is no urgency whatsoever and a great need for the time to take a more reflective approach. Many feel, however, that the office has tended to lean too much toward the merely reportorial -- with feature articles constituting a major exception. There is concern that too many items contain superficial analysis and really are nothing more that there is than a gist too little speculation and too much of a tendency to be reactive rather than premonitory. And the seeming need to fill four pages regardless of the flow of events or information means that some of the reportorial items -- already less valuable because they are skimpy in analytic content -are marginal at best. The principle of selectivity does not appear to operate as much as it should because of the NID's voracious appetite for copy. (There is recognition that one man's marginal item is another man's meat, but even with this distinction in mind, some still feel that the NID runs some items which are of questionable value to policy makers). And too often the paper seems to carry merely a series of announcements. The NID is seen as saturating its readers with a blow-by-blow coverage without providing the necessary perspective.
- 9. There is also some problem of balance in the NID-and in the CIB as well. Given the high level of readership,
  items that emanate from the functional offices in growing
  proliferation--economic, scientific, technical and military-too frequently appear without any obvious effort to provide
  an essential "meaning."
- 10. Most analysts recognize that the functions of reporting and analysis are not mutually exclusive and should in fact go hand in hand. But, as indicated earlier, certain constraints seem to be operating which make it difficult to achieve the proper blend. Because the newspaper offers a unique opportunity to achieve a timely mix of hard intelligence, informed speculation, and fact and analysis, the NID should continue to strive toward that ambitious goal.

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- The committee assumed -- as did those it queried -that what was in fact wanted was that special mix. But that raises the problem of the absence of clear guidelines. though there have been discussions between the front office and the divisions, there is still a great deal of confusion over the general philosophy behind the paper. The question arises whether the DCI has in fact given any guidelines. Is the NID what it is because it reflects the Director's wishes or because the NID staff thinks this is what is wanted? Or is the staff more or less operating on its own with some front office guidance? Whoever is calling the shots, the signals are unclear. Although the NID staff does not see this as a problem, most analysts are still confused as to what is wanted, in what proportion, with what blend of fact and analysis, with what end goal and directed at whom.
- Then, too, there is concern that, over the longer run, the NID could have a deleterious effect on other important OCI functions and duties. The NID, with its emphasis on current news and provocative feature articles, consumes analyst time and often disrupts other activity. It is true that some NID items -- again feature articles stand out in this regard -- are drawn from other production, including production done over a time span that permits and encourages reflection. But analysts still fear that there will not be enough time to indulge in the reflection, the in-depth reading, the patient searching out of information and the brainstorming with colleagues that ultimately produce sound intelligence judgments. In most divisions, the production of memoranda and special articles has declined (although it is recognized that the NID is not solely responsible and that the vacuum has to some extent been filled by the feature articles). The Soviet Internal branch has faced a special problem because of the pressures created by the NID, and these pressures could be a factor at one time or another in any denied area. Specifically, SRI and to a lesser extent EE and SRE must routinely sift through large quantities of published materials and intelligence reports to detect significant new developments and policy shifts. But the NID, with its unceasing demand for items, has obliged SRI analysts to focus attention primarily on surface phenomena.

- 13. Another key concern is the impact that the NID will have on other regular OCI publications. Because the relationship among the various publications is a very complicated one, such questions as when there should be overlap and duplication and how items should be tailored to particular publications arise. In many divisions, the CIB is seldom thought of independently of the NID. While in certain instances the duplication may be healthy, there is some feeling that the CIB should carry items of a slightly different nature. With so many items being written for the NID, however, it is all too easy for the CIB merely to feed off that publication. Then, too, Staff Notes in some divisions are looked upon as the logical -- and best--basic source for the NID. In other divisions, there is a conscious effort to keep the publications separate. The production of ad hoc, longer publications also is affected -- as mentioned earlier -- by the NID. Feature articles can only be a partial substitute for the special articles and memoranda of which OCI has always been rightfully proud in the past.
- 14. Finally, many feel that the editing process poses major problems. Not all OCI analysts write clearly and concisely and some are still a little unclear as to what changes in writing style are necessary for a newspaper format. Divisions do not always meet NID standards and do not always send items forward early enough to give the editors sufficient time for review. Editors can and do perform an invaluable service in some instances by transforming items into readable prose and by catching errors made somewhere along the line. But it is still difficult to see the need for approximately six or seven layers of review: by the branch chief, by the division production officer, by the division chief, by the associate editor of the NID, by the senior editor, by the editor-in-chief and, finally, by the night editor. Although the bulk of items for the paper are prepared during the day, some are not finally processed until 7-8:00 in the evening. The analyst, who too often sees his article in print without having had a chance to make a final check on it, feels he has lost an essential degree of control over his work. This leads to a diminished sense of responsibility and involvement and frustration over his inability to perform the job properly. Most important to the office, the NID staff, and the analysts, however, is that OCI's reputation for accuracy is at stake.

16. Although analysts have had varying experiences with the NID staff and editing problems do not arise on all occasions, certain themes tend to recur: that some NID editors are more concerned with imposing an overall style (even in the feature articles, which should allow a greater flexibility) than with classic editing designed to make items clear and accurate; that errors tend to creep in because the items are massaged by so many people (and, although egregious errors have been infrequent, even small ones over time undermine the office's reputation); that night editors are sometimes reluctant to change editing done by the day staff even when the division representative feels there are real problems; that analysts' speculation is sometimes turned into hard fact; that some of the NID staff are reluctant to make revisions in an item once it is in galley form (and this failure to take account of additional, even if not major, developments tends to defeat the goal of being up-to-date); and that headlines are sometimes quite misleading.

#### Recommendations

- 15. Insofar as some of the problems cited in the earlier section can be solved, the committee has come up with some specific recommendations—ones that will require work and cooperation not only on the part of the NID staff and the front office but also from the divisions as well.
- 16. We did not include in our recommendations a call for increased hiring at this point.\* There is a recognition that we are being asked to do more while our ranks are thinning, that perhaps too many responsibilities have been placed on an already creaking apparatus. Over the longer run, therefore, the office may have to hire more people, particularly if OCI takes on any additional responsibilities and if the

<sup>\*</sup>One point the committee feels should be made: as a result of the shakeups last year, there is among some people a great sensitivity on the issue of job security. The prospect of hiring additional people is seen as a distinct threat, and some OCIers would rather be overburdened than take the chance of being declared "excess" at some future point.

NIOs increasingly levy demands on the office. (This is already the case in Western Europe). We may be able to continue to carry out all of the tasks assigned us but at a price: a decline in the over-all quality of the work; a lack of time to break new analytic ground; less and less attention to phenomena--other than strictly military, political, and economic questions--that should also shape intelligence judgments; diminished production of longer memoranda and special projects of an analytic nature; and a growing unwillingness to release analysts for such revitalizing and necessary activities as orientation trips, TDYs, outside training, rotational tours, special programs, and so forth.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- --that the NID staff hold a series of discussions on a branch by branch basis to offer a thorough review of NID procedures and to answer any questions or clear up any misunderstandings. As necessary thereafter, additional ad hoc, informal sessions could be held. The divisions and NID staffers should be encouraged to communicate on a more regular basis to resolve problems. staff, for example, could pass on comments as to why items weren't used, what items were particularly good and why, what changes would be helpful, what guidelines they are operating on at the moment, what kinds of spot developments should be covered and what kind ignored. The divisions, in turn, could cite their grievances on editing, priorities assigned items, selection of articles, and so forth. In short, every effort to break down the "we" - "they" feeling should be made.
- --that information on the purpose, the distribution and the composition of other publications be circulated so that office personnel can have a clearer idea of the total publication effort and how the NID fits into it. There is, for example, a great deal of confusion regarding the role of the Staff Notes in relation to other intelligence publications. Should items in the CIWR, for instance,

be duplicated in the NID or the Staff Notes? Are various OCI publications going to different audiences? What is distinctive about any of the publications?

- --that the front office make another effort to communicate whatever guidelines exist on the NID. The D/OCI and might consider another round of talks with the divisions and address such issues as the relationship between the NID and OCI's overall mission (and the contours of this mission under the Nixon administration with its heavy reliance on Dr. Kissinger and the NSC staff); how they feel the paper can be improved; to what extent does the NID reflect the DCI's views or those of OCI; are resources that could better be expended elsewhere going to the NID; is a staffing reorganization under consideration?
- --that the front office, in addition to the survey of consumers, try to obtain some feedback on a regular basis from the NID's high-level readership. Apart from a more regular querying of the readers, the front office might want to bring together others--such as NIOs, DDO, the IC Staff--who deal with these readers to obtain their views on how well the NID is serving the top officials.
- --that the results of any studies done on the NID be circulated throughout the office. This would include the studies and comparisons the NID staff is now preparing, the report on consumers being prepared by the D/OCI, and any other future studies. Release of such information should give all a clearer picture of the NID, its functions, and how well it is performing its mission.
- --that, insofar as possible, analysts have the right of final review of their items. To achieve this, the bottleneck created by the three-layer NID review system--associate editor, senior editor, and editor-in-chief--must be eliminated. Insofar

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as is possible, items sent up during the day should be back to the analyst for a final check by close of normal business hours or shortly thereafter.

- --that divisions accept a concommitant responsibility for processing items efficiently and sending them forward in good time. To that end, divisions should review their procedures on NID production and, if necessary, reallocate their resources to ensure a thorough but speedy review. A closer scrutiny of items by branch chiefs would help in this matter.
- --that basic analytic decisions on items--what to publish, when to publish, what to include, and so forth--should be left insofar as possible to the division where the expertise rests. If there are differences of opinion, these should be resolved during the day if possible so that division experts can have their say. These decisions should not then be reversed by the NID staff except in unusual circumstances and only with the concurrence of the division representative.
- --that an effort be made to clarify and define the relationship between the NID and the CIB. Guidelines should be drawn up to cover such questions as: must an item appearing in the NIB also run in the NID, particularly if the item is one prepared elsewhere in the intelligence community which OCI thinks is lacking in real merit but which is not incorrect? What constitutes "community" intelligence? (Both the NID and NIB are "national" but one is fully coordinated and the other is not). Must items running in both publications be exact duplicates?
- --that divisions accept the responsibility for ensuring that coverage of their areas is complete. The divisions should be reminded and charged with the task of ensuring continuity, selectivity and infusion of analysis and not expect the NID staff to assume those burdens. The NID staff should,

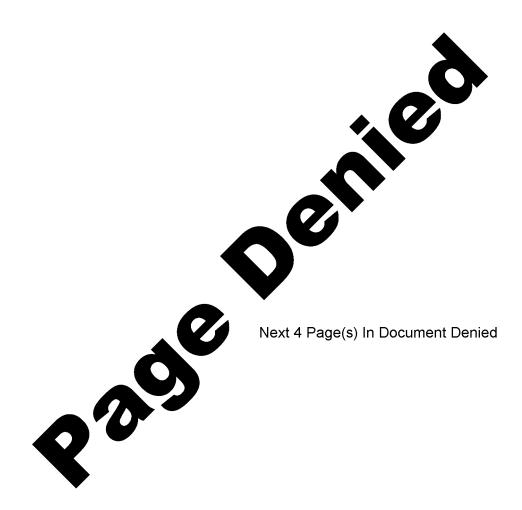
however, rely on division judgments as to when follow-up items are necessary.

- --that the question of the extremely limited distribution of the NID, particularly within the Agency, be reconsidered. Restricted distribution may well be a deterrent to gaining the cooperation of others in the DDO, in the NIO offices and on the IC staff who could help make the newspaper a better product. One way of gaining their cooperation would be to ensure that they had easy and regular access to the publication.
- --that divisions be encouraged to indicate when possible to the division night representatives what to avoid in composing headlines and what aspects of an /item might usefully be highlighted.
- --that the front office and divisions and staffs take a hard look at the allocation of resources within the office to determine if people are being used in the most efficient and meaningful fashion in light of the new burdens imposed by the NID. An age-old OCI problem has been that some people are overworked while others are underemployed. But at a time when the office is doing more work with less people, rigid adherence to existing structures and procedures is particularly damaging.
- --that divisions be given wide leeway to adopt flexible schedules when necessary. Too strict an observance of the 8-4:30 schedule makes little sense when the office is operating more and more on a round-the-clock basis. Divisions should also be given wide latitude on such matters as overtime.
- --that the NID staff be strongly encouraged to leave blank spaces or even pages if the copy is not of sufficient interest to high-level consumers. Despite frequent assurances as to the willingness to publish less than a four page paper if the

situation warrants it, there have been few instances when the paper has contained less than that amount.

- --that the divisions be encouraged to work out some kind of arrangement with CRS so that pictures of people for potential articles are on hand in the evening (pre-selected during the day by CRS and sent forward) so that the night representative is freed for more important duties. The office should also try to work out some sort of regular arrangement with NPIC so that other graphics suitable for use with NID items are on hand in the evening.
- --that the NID office be better organized to ensure that night representatives can work smoothly and effectively. Supplies (such as paper, typewriter ribbons, etc.) should be readily available and desks assigned to specific divisions and offices so that people can be more easily identified for coordination purposes.
- --that consideration be given to replacing the summary with a space for simply recording spot developments that merit attention but that for good reason--lack of urgency, need for further information, or complexity--can be better treated at length in a follow-up item.

Attachments: A-F
Comments on NID



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3 June 1974

OCI's PUBLICATIONS: Priorities and Relationships

- 1. The first thing to be said on this complex subject is that there are no absolute rules. The peculiarities of our business force us to make ad hoc decisions, to improvise, and occasionally to contradict ourselves. This said, it is still possible to put forth some useful generalities.
  - 2. OCI's priorities come in the following order.
  - a. The President's Daily Brief, which is prepared specifically for the President and Kissinger and sent only to them. It is the only intelligence publication regularly read by the President; Kissinger also sees the National Intelligence Daily but probably does not read it regularly. Memoranda requested specifically by the President or Kissinger have a priority equal to that of the PDB. Despite the importance of this top category material, it requires a relatively small expenditure of manpower.
  - b. The NID is produced for the members of the NSC and its subcommittees, their senior staff officers and the NSC Staff, a total of about 40 people who are the major formulators of national security policy. This priority also covers NSSM's, NIE's, NIAM's, and other assessments produced for the same audience. The publications in this category require the greatest share of our time and attention, because this audience (and that of the PDB) is the group that OCI--and indeed CIA--is in existence to serve. All other activities are secondary.

c. The Nation for operating and	al Intelligence Bulletin, prepared staff officialslargely in State,
Defense, and CIA	

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- d. Staff Notes. The primary audience for the Notes is the area specialist at whatever level, but the Notes are available to and often requested by generalists.
- 3. Three aspects of our activity do not fit easily into a list of priorities—the weeklies, special reports and memoranda not specifically prepared for the senior policy maker, and the WHSR series.
  - a. The CIWR/CIWS has won wide respect for its finely tuned weekly intelligence round-up. The weekly is aimed at a "general audience" broader than the NIB, including many whose jobs require only limited current intelligence input.
  - b. OCI continues to issue general interest, published memoranda and special reports, although these are less frequent than in past years. It also publishes self-initiated, uncoordinated papers on important controversial issues. The latter, which may or may not receive distribution outside OCI, are welcome and should continue to be a staple of our production.
  - c. White House Spot Reports are the initial, analyst's first, quick response to important events on incoming intelligence, especially in rapidly-moving situations. They are prepared primarily for the White House Situation Room, where they are a major input to periodic briefing notes for the President and Dr. Kissinger, and are furnished as an additional service to the Department of State Operations Center, the NMCC, and the Treasury Department. Especially sensitive material is sent only to the White House.
- 4. In practice the priorities of our periodicals are modified by their overlapping content, by the requirements for coordination, and by the timing of their production cycles. Again, some generalities are possible, but it is important to treat priorities, content, coordination, and timing separately if one is to understand the relationship of the various periodicals. (See also Attachment A).

5.	Content.

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- b. The NID is also the DCI's publication, in this case speaking to the NSC-level audience and giving more weight to Community views. Its content is governed by the concept that its readers should not have to read any other general intelligence periodical. As OCI's greatest devourer of words, it will normally contain:
- --Virtually all items from the NIB, often modified in length and wording but not in substantive judgment.
- --Materials which cannot be used in the NIB for reasons of sensitivity or classification.
  - --Late material, with analysis included when feasible.
- --Precis or summaries of important USIB issuances and other memoranda.
- --Feature articles and current reporting prepared especially for the NID, or drawn from CIA memoranda.
- --Selected material from Staff Notes, the CIWR, OER's Weeklies, etc.
- c. The NIB represents the Intelligence Community speaking to the operating level audience. It will normally contain the dozen or so developments or reports at its classification level which the participating USIB agencies consider of national importance. The NIB is a new publication, still working out its procedures, but in general the principles which have governed Red CIB content in the past will apply.

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- d. The regional Staff Notes series vary in concept, periodicity, and classification, but each reflects what the preparing Division believes would be most useful to its customers, at Assistant Secretary level and below. Senior members of the NSC Staff receive the NID and all other Staff Note customers have access to the NIB. The Staff Notes should be viewed as regional supplements to the NIB, although for various reasons some of the same material often appears in both. A regional specialist should be fully served if he reads the NID or NIB and the appropriate series of Staff Notes; he need read no other intelligence periodical.
- e. The CIWR/CIWS is CIA speaking to the general audience. Its content must be selected on the assumption that the reader does not have access to the other publications, even though many readers do. The general reader whose needs are less immediate should be fully served by the Weekly. It cannot be assumed, however, that our most important consumers read one of the weeklies. The Weekly is often only scanned or not read at all when a reader is busy. When we do a post-mortem, appearance of an item in the Weekly gives evidence that the analyst has done half of his job, i.e. he has spotted a trend. But he has failed to do the other half, warning our most important consumers, unless the same warning appears in the dailies. Our current intelligence record is made in our daily publications.
- 6. <u>Coordination</u>. In general, the PDB, NID, and NIB should present the same substantive judgments on the same major items each day, to the extent that classification permits. Departures in judgment should have the approval at least of the D/OCI.

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b. Coordination requirements for the NID are flexible. Material should be coordinated in general substance, not in precise language, and should express major differences of view. This means that any material withheld from the NIB for reasons of sensitivity must be coordinated

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in substance at least with the agency of primary concern. Drafts of all other material, time permitting, must be provided to the agency of primary concern for comment. Suggestions should be requested but need not be accepted. Signed feature articles need not be coordinated, except those on military subjects.

- c. The NIB will be "fully coordinated" in language as well as in judgment, to the extent that time permits. (It is not yet clear precisely what this entails.) Differences of view, unless trivial, will be expressed textually (and important ones will of course carry over to the NID and PDB).
- d. Staff Notes and the Weeklies will be coordinated only within the Agency.
- 7. Timing and Procedure. The analyst should only have to draft a particular story once, although he may have to adapt it to new information. Virtually all material must be prepared with the possibility of NID use in mind. Thus standard current "items" should be written as much as possible in newspaper style--paragraphs in descending order of importance. The following is an idealized version of the daily production cyclewe all know it cannot work in such a rational way much of the time. (See also Attachment B).
  - a. Priority does not govern the <u>order</u> in which OCI does things; efficiency and receipt of information do. In some Divisions all daily material is first prepared in Staff Notes form and is progressively winnowed out for the major publications. In others, material is prepared primarily for the NID, and filters downward to the NIB and Notes. Whatever the order, analysts should remember that the NIB process is the most time-consuming. All drafts should go to the PDB, NID, and NIB staffs as early as possible in the day.
  - b. During the day the PDB Staff will select, edit, and assemble drafts for review by the D/OCI, DDI, and DCI or DDCI. Occasionally an NIO will be involved as well. When this review process is completed the NID Staff will take over responsibility for the PDB.

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- c. Simultaneously, the NIB Staff will assemble, edit and ensure coordination of an NIB text. At conclusion of the working day this text will be turned over to the SDO for updating, any further coordination required, and final production. The SDO will work in consultation with the NID editors and the night regional representatives attached to the NID Staff.
- d. Meanwhile, the NID Staff will have assembled and edited a body of material for their next issue. The NID Staff is responsible for seeing that changes made in PDB versions of these drafts in the senior review process and in NIB versions in the coordination process carry over in substance to the NID version.
- e. From this point on, the NID Staff and night shift analysts are responsible for updating the PDB and NID and keeping them in step. They will cooperate with the SDO in updating the NIB. Coordination with other agencies will continue, according to the rules for each publication, as long as the other agencies are willing. As a general rule only important new items will be added to the PDB and NIB; thus new reportorial material prepared for the NID need not appear in the other publications the same morning. Furthermore, because the NIB will be put to bed well before the PDB and NID, late information or makeup problems may force other departures from parallel treatment.

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